

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAM #2482 1611424
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 101424Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8999

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002482

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/10/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: MINOR CLASH ERUPTS AS JORDAN RECLAIMS STATE-OWNED
PROPERTY

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Jordanian police killed a gunman in the Jordan Valley in connection with a GOJ program to reclaim state-owned property throughout the country. Jordanian police consider the incident a criminal matter. The restoration of the state's rights in face of longstanding illicit use by East Bank tribes might have political overtones, increasing anti-government sentiment as elections approach. End Summary.

Reclaiming State-Owned Land Sparks Clashes

¶2. (U) Policemen killed a gunman and injured another on Saturday June 9 in South Shuneh in the Jordan Valley. The violence was linked with the GOJ's campaign to reclaim state property from illegal seizure, which has prompted protests in recent days in the Jordan Valley. Arabic daily "Al-Arab Al-Yawm" on Saturday quoted Interior Minister Eid Al-Fayez as saying that the government was engaged in a "campaign to stop transgressions on state property that is going to spread to all the governorates."

¶3. (C) The Public Security Directorate (PSD) told RSO that armed gunmen fired automatic weapons from a pick-up truck at police who were escorting water and electric company officials. The police returned fire, killing one of the gunmen, wounding another and arresting three. PSD police officers are continuing to seek the arrests of others allegedly involved in the incident, and are treating it as a criminal matter. The deceased gunman and those arrested belong to the Adwan family, a large East Bank tribal family from which the government is reclaiming state-owned land.

30-year Issue of State-Owned Property

¶4. (C) NOTE: The GOJ has faced the problem of illegal land use for many years. After "Black September" in 1970, the GOJ promoted the "Jordanization" of Jordan. Part of this process in effect allowed East Bank tribes to use state-owned land as a way to attract and maintain tribal support for the government. In recent years, the GOJ has begun to address the problem of illegal land use, including non-payment of electricity and water bills, the seizure of state-owned lands, the sale of state-owned lands and illegally dug wells.
END NOTE.

Impact on Upcoming Elections

¶5. (C) Comment: The campaign to reclaim state property may have an impact on municipal elections set to take place July 31, and national elections scheduled for later in the year. Upsetting East Bank tribes may cost pro-Government candidates in upcoming elections, and opposition groups such as the

Islamic Action Front are likely to use the government action to attract tribal support. Some Jordanians speculate that the government will only go after the "small fish" who have used state-owned property illegally while not going after more well-connected Jordanians who have enriched themselves through the use of state-owned property. Meanwhile, the government is seeking to increase transparency by normalizing land transactions and title ownership, a tough prospect after years of off-the-books favors and tolerance of illegal land use.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>
Hale